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POEMS.





POEMS

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON.



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P O E M S.



SONNET.



MINE be the strength of spirit fierce and free,
Like some broad river rushing down alone,
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown
From his loud fount upon the echoing lea :—
Which with increasing might doth forward flee
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,
And in the middle of the green salt sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.
Mine be the Power which ever to it's sway
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;
Even as the great gulfstream of Florida
Floats far away into the Northern seas
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

TO ———

—————

I.

ALL good things have not kept aloof,
Nor wandered into other ways :
I have not lacked thy mild reproof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise,
But life is full of weary days.

II.

Shake hands, my friend, across the brink
Of that deep grave to which I go.
Shake hands once more : I cannot sink
So far—far down, but I shall know
Thy voice, and answer from below.

III.

When, in the darkness over me,
The fourhanded mole shall scrape,
Plant thou no dusky cypresstree,
Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful crape,
But pledge me in the flowing grape.

IV.

And when the sappy field and wood
Grow green beneath the showery gray,
And rugged barks begin to bud,
And through damp holts, newflushed with May,
Ring sudden laughters of the Jay ;

V.

Then let wise Nature work her will
And on my clay her darnels grow.
Come only, when the days are still,
And at my headstone whisper low,
And tell me if the woodbines blow,

VI.

If thou art blest, my mother's smile
Undimmed, if bees are on the wing :
Then cease, my friend, a little while,
That I may hear the throstle sing
His bridal song, the boast of spring.

VII.

Sweet as the noise in parchèd plains
Of bubbling wells that fret the stones,
(If any sense in me remains)
Thy words will be; thy cheerful tones
As welcome to my crumbling bones.

BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,
Madman !—to chain with chains, and bind with bands
That island queen that sways the floods and lands
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,
When from her wooden walls, lit by sure hands,
With thunders, and with lightnings, and with smoke,
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,
Rocking with shattered spars, with sudden fires
Flamed over: at Trafalgar yet once more
We taught him: late he learned humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon schooled with briars.

SONNET.

I.

O BEAUTY, passing beauty ! sweetest Sweet !

How can'st thou let me waste my youth in sighs ?
I only ask to sit beside thy feet.

Thou knowest I dare not look into thine eyes.
Might I but kiss thy hand ! I dare not fold

My arms about thee—scarcely dare to speak.
And nothing seems to me so wild and bold,
As with one kiss to touch thy blessèd cheek.

Methinks if I should kiss thee, no control

Within the thrilling brain could keep afloat
The subtle spirit. Even while I spoke,
The bare word KISS hath made my inner soul
To tremble like a lutestring, ere the note
Hath melted in the silence that it broke.

SONNET.

II.

BUT were I loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
And range of evil between death and birth,
That I should fear,—if I were loved by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert mine,
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,
Fresh-water-springs come up through bitter brine.
'Twere joy, not fear, clasped hand-in-hand with thee,
To wait for death—mute—careless of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, though the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART THE FIRST.

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold, and meet the sky.
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To manytowered Camelot.
The yellowleavèd waterlily,
The greensheathèd daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
 Round about Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens shiver,
The sunbeam-showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever
By the island in the river,

Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls and four gray towers
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers

The Lady of Shalott.

Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel, singing clearly,
O'er the stream of Camelot.

Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary
Listening whispers, " 'tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

The little isle is all inrailed
With a rose-fence, and overtrailed
With roses : by the marge unhailed
The shallop flitteth silkensailed,
 Skimming down to Camelot.
A pearlgarland winds her head :
She leaneth on a velvet bed,
Full royally apparellèd,
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE SECOND.

No time hath she to sport and play :
A charmèd web she weaves away.
A curse is on her, if she stay
Her weaving, either night or day,
 To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be ;
Therefore she weaveth steadily,
Therefore no other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

She lives with little joy or fear.
Over the water, running near,
The sheepbell tinkles in her ear.
Before her hangs a mirror clear,
Reflecting towered Camelot.
And, as the mazy web she whirls,
She sees the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market-girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,
Or longhaired page, in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot.

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue,
The knights come riding, two and two.
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights :
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, came from Camelot.
Or, when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers, lately wed :
" I am half-sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE THIRD.

A bowshot from her bower-eaves.
He rode between the barleysheaves :
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Launcelot.
A redcross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden galaxy.
The bridle-bells rang merrily,
 As he rode down from Camelot.

And, from his blazoned baldric slung,
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And, as he rode, his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather,
Thickjewelled shone the saddle-leather.
The helmet, and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down from Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over green Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed.
On burnished hooves his warhorse trode.
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coalblack curls, as on he rode,
As he rode down from Camelot.

From the bank, and from the river,
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
“ Tirra lirra, tirra lirra,”
Sang Sir Launcelot.

She left the web : she left the loom :
She made three paces thro' the room :
She saw the waterflower bloom :
She saw the helmet and the plume :
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web, and floated wide,
The mirror cracked from side to side,
“ The curse is come upon me,” cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART THE FOURTH.

In the stormy eastwind straining
The pale-yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining

Over towered Camelot :

Outside the isle a shallow boat
Beneath a willow lay afloat,
Below the carven stern she wrote,

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight.
All raimented in snowy white
That loosely flew, (her zone in sight,
Clasped with one blinding diamond bright,)
Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,

Though the squally eastwind keenly
Blew, with folded arms serenely
By the water stood the queenly
Lady of Shalott.

With a steady, stony glance—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Beholding all his own mischance,
Mute, with a glassy countenance—
She looked down to Camelot.

It was the closing of the day,
She loosed the chain, and down she lay,
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

As when to sailors while they roam,
By creeks and outfalls far from home,
Rising and dropping with the foam,
From dying swans wild warblings come,
Blown shoreward ; so to Camelot

Still as the boathead wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her chanting her deathsong,
The Lady of Shalott.

A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,
She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her eyes were darkened wholly,
And her smooth face sharpened slowly
Turned to towered Camelot :
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the waterside,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By gardenwall and gallery,
A pale, pale corpse she floated by,
Deadcold, between the houses high,
Dead into towered Camelot.

Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
To the plankèd wharfage came :
Below the stern they read her name,
“ The Lady of Shalott.”

They crossed themselves, their stars they blest,
Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire and guest.
There lay a parchment on her breast,
That puzzled more than all the rest,
The wellfed wits at Camelot.

“ *The web was woven curiously
The charm is broken utterly,
Draw near and fear not—this is I,
The Lady of Shalott.*”

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.*

BEHIND the barren hill upsprung
 With pointed rocks against the light,
The crag sharpshadowed overhung
 Each glaring creek and inlet bright.
Far, far, one lightblue ridge was seen,
 Looming like baseless fairyland ;
 Eastward a slip of burning sand,
Dark-rimmed with sea, and bare of green.
Down in the dry salt-marshes stood
 That house darklatticed. Not a breath
 Swayed the sick vineyard underneath,
Or moved the dusty southernwood.

* See Poems, chiefly Lyrical.

“Madonna,” with melodious moan
 Sang Mariana, night and morn,
 “Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
 Love-forgotten and love-forlorn.”

She, as her carol sadder grew,
 From her warm brow and bosom down
 Through rosy taper fingers drew
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown
 On either side, and made appear,
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
 Her melancholy eyes divine,
 The home of woe without a tear.

“Madonna,” with melodious moan
 Sang Mariana, night and morn,
 “Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
 Love-forgotten and love-forlorn.”

When the dawncrimson changed, and past
 Into deep orange o’er the sea,
 Low on her knees herself she cast,
 Unto our lady prayèd she.

She moved her lips, she prayed alone,
She praying disarrayed and warm
From slumber, deep her wavy form
In the darklustrous mirror shone.

“Madonna,” in a low clear tone
Said Mariana, night and morn,
Low she mourned, “I am all alone,
Love-forgotten, and love-forlorn.”

At noon she slumbered. All along
The silvery field, the large leaves talked
With one another, as among
The spikèd maize in dreams she walked.
The lizard leapt: the sunlight played:
She heard the callow nestling lisp,
And brimful meadow-runners crisp,
In the full-leavèd platan-shade.

In sleep she breathed in a lower tone,
Murmuring as at night and morn,
“Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
Love-forgotten and love-forlorn.”

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream

Most false : *he* was and was not there.

She woke : the babble of the stream

Fell, and without the steady glare

Shrank the sick olive sere and small.

The riverbed was dusty-white ;

From the bald rock the blinding light

Beat ever on the sunwhite wall.

She whispered, with a stifled moan

More inward than at night or morn,

“ Madonna, leave me not all alone,

To die forgotten and live forlorn.”

One dry cicala's summer song

At night filled all the gallery,

Backward the latticeblind she flung,

And leaned upon the balcony.

Ever the low wave seemed to roll

Up to the coast : far on, alone

In the East, large Hesper overshone

The mourning gulf, and on her soul

Poured divine solace, or the rise

Of moonlight from the margin gleamed,

Volcano-like, afar, and streamed

On her white arm, and heavenward eyes.

Not all alone she made her moan,

Yet ever sang she, night and morn,

“Madonna, lo! I am all alone,

Love-forgotten and love-forlorn.”

ELEANORE.

THY dark eyes opened not—

Nor first revealed themselves to English air,

For there is nothing here,

Which, from the outward to the inward brought,

Moulded thy baby thought.

Far off from human neighbourhood,

Thou wert born, on a summer morn,

A mile beneath the cedarwood.

Thy bounteous forehead was not fanned

With breezes from our oaken glades,

But thou wert nursed in some delicious land

Of lavish lights, and floating shades :

And flattering thy childish thought,

The oriental fairy brought,

At the moment of thy birth,
From old wellheads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
And shadowed coves on a sunny shore,
The choicest wealth of all the earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

Or the yellowbanded bees,
Through half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
With whitest honey in fairy gardens culled—
A glorious child, dreaming alone,
In silksoft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees,
Into dreamful slumber lulled.

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister

To thee, with fruitage goldenrinded
On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grapethickened from the light, and blinded
With many a deephued bell-like flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the Even,
All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland meer,
Eleänore !

How may fullsailed verse express,
How may measured words adore
The fullflowing harmony
Of thy swanlike stateliness,
Eleänore ?

The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
Eleänore ?

Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,
And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For in thee
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single ;
Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer, in one shrine,
 Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho'
They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep,
 Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,

Daily and hourly, more and more.

I muse, as in a trance, the while

Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,

Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.

I muse, as in a trance, whene'er

The languors of thy loved deep eyes,

Float on to me. I would I were

So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,

To stand apart, and to adore,

Gazing on thee for evermore,

Serene, imperial Eleänore !

Sometimes, with most intensity

Gazing, I seem to see

Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,

Slowly awakened, grow so full and deep

In thy large eyes, that, overpowered quite,

I cannot veil, or droop my sight,

But am as nothing in its light.

As though a star, in inmost heaven set,

Ev'n while we gaze on it,

Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fixed—then as slowly fade again,

And draw itself to what it was before ;

So full, so deep, so slow,

Thought seems to come and go

In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

As thunderclouds that, hung on high,

Did roof noonday with doubt and fear,

Floating through an evening atmosphere,

Grow golden all about the sky ;

In thee all passion becomes passionless,

Touched by thy spirit's mellowness,

Losing his fire and active might,

In a silent meditation,

Falling into a still delight,

And luxury of contemplation :

As waves that from the outer deep

Roll into a quiet cove,

There fall away, and lying still,

Having glorious dreams in sleep,
Shadow forth the banks at will ;
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea :
And the selfsame influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.
His bowstring slackened, languid Love,
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
Droops both his wings, regarding thee,
And so would languish evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,
When the amorous, odorous wind,
Breathes low between the sunset and the moon,
Or, in a shadowy saloon,
On silken cushions half reclined,
I gaze on thee the cloudless noon
Of mortal beauty : in its place

My heart a charmèd slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face,
And a languid fire creeps
Through my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly : soon
From thy rose-red lips MY name
Floweth ; then I faint, I swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my colour, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimmed with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee ;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I *would* be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleänore.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I.

I MET in all the close green ways,
While walking with my line and rod,
The wealthy miller's mealy face,
Like the moon in an ivytod.
He looked so jolly and so good—
While fishing in the milldam-water,
I laughed to see him as he stood,
And dreamt not of the miller's daughter.

II.

I see the wealthy miller yet—
His double chin—his portly size ;
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes,

The slow wise smile, that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curled,
Seemed half-within, and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

III.

In yonder chair I see him sit—
Three fingers round the old silver cup:
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound and clear and whole,
His memory scarce makes me sad.

IV.

Yet fill my glass,—give me one kiss;
My darling Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss,
Shall be unriddled by and by.

There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my own sweet wife,
That we may die the selfsame day.

v.

My father's mansion, mounted high,
Looked down upon the village-spire.
I was a long and listless boy,
And son and heir unto the squire.
In these dear walls, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

vi.

I often heard the cooing dove
In firry woodlands mourn alone,
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own :

For scarce my life with fancy played,
 Before I dreamed that pleasant dream,
Still hither, thither, idly swayed,
 Like the long mosses in the stream.

VII.

Sometimes I whistled in the wind,
 Sometimes I angled, thought and deed
'Trepid, as swallows left behind
 That winter 'neath the floating weed :
At will to wander everyway
 From brook to brook my sole delight,
As lithe eels over meadows gray
 Oft shift their glimmering pool by night.

VIII.

How dear to me in youth, my love,
 Was every thing about the mill,
The black and silent pool above,
 The pool beneath that ne'er stood still,

The mealsacks on the whitened floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal !

IX.

I loved from off the bridge to hear
The rushing sound the water made,
And see the fish that everywhere
In the backcurrent glanced and played ;
Low down the tall flagflower that sprung
Beside the noisy steppingstones,
And the massed chestnutboughs that hung
Thickstudded over with white cones.

X.

Remember you that pleasant day
When, after roving in the woods,
('Twas April then) I came and lay
Beneath those gummy chestnutbuds

That glistened in the April blue.
 Upon the slope so smooth and cool,
I lay and never thought of *you*,
 But angled in the deep millpool.

XI.

A water-rat from off the bank
 Plunged in the stream. With idle care,
Downlooking thro' the sedges rank,
 I saw your troubled image there.
Upon the dark and dimpled beck
 It wandered like a floating light,
A full fair form, a warm white neck,
 And two white arms—how rosy white !

XII.

If you remember, you had set
 Upon the narrow casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
 And you were leaning from the ledge.

I raised my eyes at once : above

They met two eyes so blue and bright,
Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,
That they have never lost their light.

XIII.

That slope beneath the chestnut tall

Is wooed with choicest breaths of air :
Methinks that I could tell you all

The cowslips and the kingcups there.
Each coltsfoot down the grassy bent,
Whose round leaves hold the gathered shower,
Each quaintly-folded cuckoopint,
And silver-paly cuckooflower.

XIV.

In rambling on the eastern wold,

When thro' the showery April nights
Their hueless crescent glimmered cold,
From all the other village-lights

I knew your taper far away.

My heart was full of trembling hope.

Down from the wold I came and lay

Upon the dewyswarded slope.

xv.

The white chalkquarry from the hill

Upon the broken ripple gleamed,

I murmured lowly, sitting still

While round my feet the eddy streamed :

“ Oh ! that I were the wreath she wreathes,

The mirror where her sight she feeds,

The song she sings, the air she breathes,

The letters of the book she reads.”

xvi.

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin,

And, in the pauses of the wind,

Sometimes I heard you sing within,

Sometimes your shadow crossed the blind.

At last you rose, and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darkened there.

XVII.

I loved, but when I dared to speak
My love, the lanes were white with May,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flushed like the coming of the day.
Rosecheekt, roselipt, half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one,
Altho' I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

XVIII.

Remember you the clear moonlight,
That whitened all the eastern ridge,
When o'er the water, dancing white,
I stepped upon the old millbridge.

I heard you whisper from above
A lute-toned whisper, "I am here ;"
I murmured, "Speak again, my love,
The stream is loud : I cannot hear."

XIX.

I heard, as I have seemed to hear,
When all the under-air was still,
The low voice of the glad new year
Call to the freshly-flowered hill.
I heard, as I have often heard
The nightingale in leavy woods
Call to its mate, when nothing stirred
To left or right but falling floods.

XX.

Come, Alice, sing to me the song
I made you on our marrieday,
When, arm in arm, we went along
Half-tearfully, and you were gay

With brooch and ring : for I shall seem,
The while you sing that song, to hear
The millwheel turning in the stream,
And the green chestnut whisper near.

SONG.

I wish I were her earring,
Ambushed in auburn ringlets sleek,
(So might my shadow tremble
Over her downy cheek,)
Hid in her hair, all day and night,
Touching her neck so warm and white.

I wish I were the girdle
Buckled about her dainty waist,
That her heart might beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest.
I should know well if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

I wish I were her necklace,
So might I ever fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom
With her laughter, or her sighs.
I would lie round so warm and light
I would not be unclasped at night.

XXI.

A trifle, sweet ! which true love spells—
True love interprets right alone ;
For o'er each letter broods and dwells,
(Like light from running waters thrown
On flowery swaths) the blissful flame
Of his sweet eyes, that, day and night,
With pulses thrilling thro' his frame
Do inly tremble, starrybright.

XXII.

How I waste language—yet in truth
 You must blame love, whose early rage
Made me a rhymster in my youth,
 And over-garrulous in age.
Sing me that other song I made,
 Half-angered with my happy lot,
When in the breezy limewood-shade,
 I found the blue forget-me-not.

SONG.

All yesternight you met me not.
My ladylove, forget me not.
When I am gone, regret me not,
But, here or there, forget me not.
With your arched eyebrow threat me not,
 And tremulous eyes, like April skies,
 That seem to say, 'forget me not.'
I pray you, love, forget me not.

In idle sorrow set me not ;
Regret me not : forget me not :
Oh ! leave me not ; oh, let me not
Wear quite away ;—forget me not.
With roguish laughter fret me not
From dewy eyes, like April skies,
That ever *look*, ‘forget me not,’
Blue as the blue forget-me-not.

XXIII.

Look thro’ mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine,
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro’ my very soul with thine.
Untouched with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell,
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes ! since first I knew them well.

XXIV.

I've half a mind to walk, my love,
 To the old mill across the wolds,
For look! the sunset from above
 Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casementglass,
 Touching the sullen pool below.
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
 Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

Φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν

Εμμεν ἀνὴρ.

SAPPHO.

I.

O LOVE, Love, Love ! oh, withering might !

O sun, that at thy noonday height

Shudderest, when I strain my sight,

Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light !

Lo ! falling from my constant mind,

Lo ! parched and withered, deaf and blind,

I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

II.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,

From my swift blood, that went and came,

A thousand little shafts of flame

Were shivered in my narrow frame.

O Love, O fire ! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

III.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly : from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.

In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Downdeepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

IV.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is poured upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire ;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

v.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye,
I *will* possess him or will die.

I will grow round him in his place,
Grow—live—die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasped in his embrace.

ŒNONE.

THERE is a dale in Ida, lovelier
Than any in old Ionia, beautiful
With emerald slopes of sunny sward, that lean
Above the loud glenriver, which hath worn
A path thro' steepdown granite walls below
Mantled with flowering tendriltwine. In front
The cedarshadowy valleys open wide.
Far-seen, high over all the Godbuilt wall
And many a snowycolumned range divine,
Mounted with awful sculptures—men and Gods,
The work of Gods—bright on the darkblue sky
The windy citadel of Ilion
Shone, like the crown of Troas. Hither came
Mournful Œnone wandering forlorn

Of Paris, once her playmate. Round her neck,
Her neck all marblewhite and marblecold,
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a vine-entwinèd stone,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shadow
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“ O mother Ida, manyfountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
The grasshopper is silent in the grass,
The lizard with his shadow on the stone
Sleeps like a shadow, and the scarletwinged*
Cicala in the noonday leapeth not
Along the water-rounded granite-rock
The purple flower droops: the golden bee
Is lilycradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

* In the Pyrenees, where part of this poem was written, I saw a very beautiful species of Cicala, which had scarlet wings spotted with black. Probably nothing of the kind exists in Mount Ida.

“ O mother Ida, manyfountained Ida, :
 Dear mother Ida; hearken ere I die.
 Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills, O Caves
 That house the cold crowned snake! O mountain brooks,
 I am the daughter of a River-God,
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
 A cloud that gathered shape: for it may be
 That, while I speak of it, a little while
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“ O mother Ida, manyfountained Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewydark,
 And dewydark aloft the mountain pine ;
 Beautiful Paris, evilhearted Paris,
 Leading a jetblack goat whitehorned, whitehooved,
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“ O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.

I sate alone : the goldensandalled morn
Rosehued the scornful hills : I sate alone
With downdropt eyes : whitebreasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he came : a leopard skin
From his white shoulder drooped : his sunny hair
Clustered about his temples like a God's :
And his cheek brightened, as the foambow brightens
When the wind blows the foam ; and I called out,
' Welcome Apollo, welcome home Apollo,
Apollo, my Apollo, loved Apollo.'

“ Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He, mildly smiling, in his milkwhite palm
Close-held a golden apple, lightningbright
With changeful flashes, dropt with dew of Heaven
Ambrosially smelling. From his lip,
Curved crimson, the fullflowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

“ ‘ My own CEnone,
Beautifulbrowed CEnone, mine own soul,

Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
“ For the most fair,” in aftertime may breed
Deep evilwilledness of heaven and sere
Heartburning toward hallowed Ilion ;
And all the colour of my afterlife
Will be the shadow of today. Today
Here and Pallas and the floating grace
Of laughterloving Aphrodite meet
In manyfolded Ida to receive
This meed of beauty, she to whom my hand
Award the palm. Within the green hillside,
Under yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Is an ingoing grotto, strown with spar
And ivymatted at the mouth, wherein
Thou un beholden may'st behold, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

“ Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney hills.
They came—all three—the Olympian goddesses :

Naked they came to the smoothswarded bower,
Lustrous with lilyflower, violeteyed
Both white and blue, with lotetree-fruit thickset,
Shadowed with singing pine ; and all the while,
Above, the overwandering ivy and vine
This way and that in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarlèd boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.
On the treetops a golden glorious cloud
Leaned, slowly dropping down ambrosial dew.
How beautiful they were, too beautiful
To look upon ! but Paris was to me
More lovelier than all the world beside.

“ O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
First spake the imperial Olympian
With archèd eyebrow smiling sovranly,
Fulleyèd Here. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestioned, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, ‘ from many a vale

And riversundered champaign clothed with corn,
 Or upland glebe wealthy in oil and wine—
 Honour and homage, tribute, tax and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven large,
 Mast-thronged below her shadowing citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers.’

“ O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power
 ‘ Which in all action is the end of all.
 Power fitted to the season, measured by
 The height of the general feeling, wisdomborn
 And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns
 Alliance and allegiance evermore.
 Such boon from me Heaven’s Queen to thee kingborn,
 A shepherd all thy life and yet kingborn,
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in this
 Only are likest gods, who have attained
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss

In knowledge of their own supremacy ;
The changeless calm of undisputed right,
The highest height and topmost strength of power.'

“ Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flattered his heart : but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and barèd limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazenheaded spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snowcold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“ ‘ Selfreverence, selfknowledge, selfcontrol
Are the three hinges of the gates of Life,
That open into power, every way
Without horizon, bound or shadow or cloud.
Yet not for power (power of herself

Will come uncalled-for) but to live by law
Acting the law we live by without fear,
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom, in the scorn of consequence.
(Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.)
Not as men value gold because it tricks
And blazons outward Life with ornament,
But rather as the miser, for itself.
Good for selfgood doth half destroy selfgood.
The means and end, like two coiled snakes, infect
Each other, bound in one with hateful love.
So both into the fountain and the stream
A drop of poison falls. Come hearken to me,
And look upon me and consider me,
So shalt thou find me fairest, so endurance,
Like to an athlete's arm, shall still become
Sinewed with motion, till thine active will
(As the dark body of the Sun robed round
With his own ever-emanating lights)
Be flooded o'er with her own effluences,
And thereby grow to freedom.'

“ Here she ceased
And Paris pondered. I cried out, ‘ Oh Paris,
Give it to Pallas !’ but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

“ O mother Ida, manyfountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite oceanborn,
Fresh as the foam, newbathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers upward drew
From her warm brow and bosom her dark hair
Fragrant and thick, and on her head upbound
In a purple band : below her lucid neck
Shone ivorylike, and from the ground her foot
Gleamed rosywhite, and o’er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vinebunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

“ Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh

Half whispered in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
I only saw my Paris raise his arm :
I only saw great Here's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower ;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the eveningstar, with playful tail
Crouched fawning in the weed. Most loving is she ?
Ah me, my mountain-shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close—close to thine in that quickfalling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn-rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“ Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.

They came, they cut away my tallest pines—
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, or lower down
Filling greengulphèd Ida, all between
The snowy peak and snowwhite cataract
Fostered the callow eaglet—from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, nevermore
Shall lone CEnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them—never see them overlaid
With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“ Oh ! mother Ida, hearken ere I die.

Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?
Sealed it with kisses ? watered it with tears ?
Oh happy tears, and how unlike to these !

Oh happy Heaven, how can'st thou see my face ?
 Oh happy earth, how can'st thou bear my weight ?
 O death, death, death, thou everfloating cloud,
 There are enough unhappy on this earth,
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids—let me die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, hear me ere I die.
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
 Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
 Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
 Conjectures of the features of her child
 Ere it is born. I will not die alone.

“ Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.

Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armèd men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, whereso'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

THE SISTERS.

I.

WE were two daughters of one race :

She was the fairest in the face :

The wind is blowing in turret an' tree.

They were together, and she fell ;

Therefore revenge became me well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

II.

She died : she went to burning flame :

She mixed her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret an' tree.

Whole weeks and months, and early and late,

To win his love I lay in wait :

O the Earl was fair to see !

III.

I made a feast ; I bad him come :

I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret an' tree.

And after supper, on a bed,

Upon my lap he laid his head :

O the Earl was fair to see !

IV.

I kissed his eyelids into rest ;

His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret an' tree.

I hated him with the hate of hell,

But I loved his beauty passing well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

V.

I rose up in the silent night :

I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret an' tree.

As half-asleep his breath he drew,

Three times I stabbed him through and through.

O the Earl was fair to see !

VI.

I curled and combed his comely head,
He looked so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret an' tree.
I wrapped his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO ———

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you, Friend, a sort of allegory,
(You are an artist and will understand
Its many lesser meanings) of a soul,
A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,

Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sundered without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and tempered with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART.

I.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasurehouse,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, " Oh Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear Soul, for all is well.

II.

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished brass,
I chose, whose rangèd ramparts bright
From great broad meadowbases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

III.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

IV.

“ While the great world runs round and round,” I said,
“ Reign thou apart, a quiet king ;
Still, as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring.

V.

“ And richly feast within thy palacehall,
Like to the dainty bird that sups,
Lodged in the lustrous crown-imperial,
Draining the honeycups.”

VI.

To which my soul made answer readily.

“ Trust me, in bliss I shall abide

In this great mansion that is built for me

So royalrich and wide.”

VII.

Full of long sounding corridors it was

That overvaulted grateful glooms,

Roofed with thick plates of green and orange glass

Ending in stately rooms.

VIII.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,

All various, all beautiful,

Looking all ways, fitted to every mood

And change of my still soul.

IX.

For some were hung with arras green and blue

Showing a gaudy summer morn,

Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew

His wreathèd buglehorn.

X.

One showed an English home—gray twilight poured
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored—
A haunt of ancient Peace.

XI.

Some were all dark and red, a glimmering land
Lit with a low round moon,
Among brown rocks a man upon the sand
Went weeping all alone.

XII.

One seemed a foreground black with stones and slags.
Below sunsmitten icy spires
Rose striped with long white cloud the scornful crags,
Deeptrenched with thunderfires.

XIII.

Some showed far-off thick woods mounted with towers,
Nearer, a flood of mild sunshine
Poured on long walks and lawns and beds and bowers
Trellised with bunchy vine.

XIV.

*Or the maidmother by a crucifix,
 In yellow pastures sunnywarm,
 Beneath branchwork of costly sardonyx,
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

* When I first conceived the plan of the Palace of Art, I intended to have introduced both sculptures and paintings into it; but it is the most difficult of all things to *devise* a statue in verse. Judge whether I have succeeded in the statues of Elijah and Olympias.

One was the Tishbite whom the raven fed,
 As when he stood on Carmel-steeps,
 With one arm stretched out bare, and mocked and said,
 "Come cry aloud—he sleeps."

Tall, eager, lean and strong, his cloak windborne
 Behind, his forehead heavenly-bright
 From the clear marble pouring glorious scorn,
 Lit as with inner light.

One was Olympias : the floating snake
 Rolled round her ancles, round her waist
 Knotted, and folded once about her neck,
 Her perfect lips to taste

Round by the shoulder moved : she seeming blythe
 Declined her head : on every side
 The dragon's curves melted and mingled with
 The woman's youthful pride

Of rounded limbs.

XV.

Or Venus in a snowy shell alone,
Deepshadowed in the glassy brine,
Moonlike glowed double on the blue, and shone
A naked shape divine.

XVI.

Or in a clearwalled city on the sea,
Near gilded organpipes (her hair
Wound with white roses) slept Saint Cecily ;
An angel looked at her.

XVII.

Or that deepwounded child of Pendragon
Mid misty woods on sloping greens
Dozed in the valley of Avilion,
Tended by crownèd queens.

XVIII.

Or blue-eyed Kriemhilt from a craggy hold,
Athwart the lightgreen rows of vine.
Poured blazing hoards of Nibelungen gold,
Down to the gulfy Rhine.

XIX.

Europa's scarf blew in an arch, unclasped,
From her bare shoulder backward borne ;
From one hand drooped a crocus : one hand grasped
The mild bull's golden horn.

XX.

He thro' the streaming crystal swam, and rolled
Ambrosial breaths that seemed to float
In lightwreathed curls. She from the ripple cold
Updrew her sandalled foot.

XXI.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the eagle's down,
Sole, as a flying star, shot thro' the sky
Over the pillared town.

XXII.

Not these alone : but many a legend fair,
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of nature for itself, was there
Broidered in screen and blind.

XXIII.

So that my soul beholding in her pride
All these, from room to room did pass ;
And all things that she saw, she multiplied,
A manyfacèd glass ;

XXIV.

And, being both the sower and the seed,
Remaining in herself became
All that she saw, Madonna, Ganymede,
Or the Asiatic dame—

XXV.

Still changing, as a lighthouse in the night
Changeth athwart the gleaming main,
From red to yellow, yellow to pale white,
Then back to red again.

XXVI.

“ From change to change four times within the womb
The brain is moulded,” she began,
“ So thro’ all phases of all thought I come
Into the perfect man.

XXVII.

“ All nature widens upward : evermore

The simpler essence lower lies.

More complex is more perfect, owning more

Discourse, more widely wise.

XXVIII.

“ I take possession of men's minds and deeds.

I live in all things great and small.

I dwell apart, holding no forms of creeds,

But contemplating all.”

XXIX.

Fouramplecourts therewere, East, West, South, North,

In each a squarèd lawn wherefrom

A golden-gorgèd dragon spouted forth

The fountain's diamond foam.

XXX.

All round the cool green courts there ran a row

Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,

Echoing all night to that sonorous flow

Of spouted fountain floods.

XXXI.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Over the black rock streamed below
In steamy folds, that, floating as they fell,
Lit up a torrentbow ;

XXXII.

And round the roofs ran gilded galleries
That gave large view to distant lands,
Tall towns and mounds, and close beneath the skies
Long lines of amber sands.

XXXIII.

Huge incense-urns along the balustrade,
Hollowed of solid amethyst,
Each with a different odour fuming, made
The air a silver mist.

XXXIV.

Far-off 'twas wonderful to look upon
Those sumptuous towers between the gleam
Of that great foambow trembling in the sun,
And the argent incense-steam ;

XXXV.

And round the terraces and round the walls,
While day sank lower or rose higher,
To see those rails with all their knobs and balls,
Burn like a fringe of fire.

XXXVI.

Likewise the deepset windows, stained and traced,
Burned, like slowflaming crimson fires,
From shadowed grots of arches interlaced,
And topped with frostlike spires.

XXXVII.

Up in the towers I placed great bells that swung
Moved of themselves with silver sound :
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal daïs round.

XXXVIII.

There deephaired Milton like an angel tall
Stood limnèd, Shakspeare bland and mild,
Grim Dante pressed his lips, and from the wall
The bald blind Homer smiled.

XXXIX.

And underneath freshcarved in cedarwood,
Somewhat alike in form and face,
The Genii of every climate stood,
All brothers of one race :

XL.

Angels who sway the seasons by their art,
And mould all shapes in earth and sea ;
And with great effort build the human heart
From earliest infancy.

XLI.

And in the sunpierced Oriel's coloured flame
Immortal Michael Angelo
Looked down, bold Luther, largebrowed Verulam,
The king of those who know.*

XLII.

Cervantes, the bright face of Calderon,
Robed David touching holy strings,
The Halicarnasseän, and alone,
Alfred the flower of kings,

* Il maestro di color chi sanno.—*Dante, Inf. iii.*

XLIII.

Isaiah with fierce Ezekiel,
Swarth Moses by the Coptic sea,
Plato, Petrarca, Livy, and Raphaël,
And eastern Confutzee :

XLIV.

And many more, that in their lifetime were
Fullwelling fountainheads of Change,
Between the stone shafts glimmered, blazoned fair
In divers raiment strange.

XLV.

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flushed in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

XLVI.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echoed song
Throb thro' the ribbèd stone.

XLVII.

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth
 Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over nature, lord o' the visible earth,
 Lord of the senses five—

XLVIII.

As some rich tropic mountain, that infolds
 All change, from flats of scattered palms
Sloping thro' five great zones of climate, holds
 His head in snows and calms—

XLIX.

Full of her own delight and nothing else,
 My vainglorious, gorgeous soul
Sat throned between the shining oriels,
 In pomp beyond control ;

L.

With piles of flavorful fruits in basket-twine
 Of gold, upheaped, crushing down
Musk-scented blooms—all taste—grape, gourd or pine—
 In bunch, or single-grown—

LI.

Our growths, and such as brooding Indian heats
 Make out of crimson blossoms deep,
Ambrosial pulps and juices, sweets from sweets
 Sunchanged, when seawinds sleep.

LII.

With graceful chalices of curious wine,
 Wonders of art—and costly jars,
And bossèd salvers. Ere young night divine
 Crowned dying day with stars,

LIII.

Making sweet close of his delicious toils,
 She lit white streams of dazzling gas,
And soft and fragrant flames of precious oils
 In moons of purple glass

LIV.

Ranged on the fretted woodwork to the ground.
 Thus her intense untold delight,
In deep or vivid colour, smell and sound,
 Was flattered day and night.*

* If the Poem were not already too long, I should have inserted

LV.

Sometimes the riddle of the painful earth
 Flashed thro' her as she sat alone,
 Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
 And intellectual throne

LVI.

Of fullsphered contemplation. So three years
 She throve, but on the fourth she fell,
 Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
 Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

in the text the following stanzas, expressive of the joy wherewith the soul contemplated the results of astronomical experiment. In the centre of the four quadrangles rose an immense tower.

Hither, when all the deep unsounded skies
 Shuddered with silent stars, she clomb,
 And as with optic glasses her keen eyes
 Pierced thro' the mystic dome,

Regions of lucid matter taking forms,
 Brushes of fire, hazy gleams,
 Clusters and beds of worlds, and bee-like swarms
 Of suns, and starry streams.

She saw the snowy poles of moonless Mars,
 That marvellous round of milky light
 Below Orion, and those double stars
 Whereof the one more bright

Is circled by the other, &c.

LVII.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

LVIII.

When she would think, wheree'er she turned her sight
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

LIX.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her selfscorn.

LX.

"Who hath drawn dry the fountains of delight,
That from my deep heart everywhere
Moved in my blood and dwelt, as power and might
Abode in Sampson's hair?"

LXI.

“What, is not this my place of strength,” she said,
“My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundationstones were laid
Since my first memory?”

LXII.

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes, and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood
And horrible nightmares,

LXIII.

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came
That stood against the wall.

LXIV.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seemed my soul,
Mid downward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

LXV.

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore, that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moonled waters white.

LXVI.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Joined not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Rolled round by one fixed law.

LXVII.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.
“No voice,” she shrieked in that lone hall,
“No voice breaks through the stillness of this world—
“One deep, deep silence all.”

LXVIII.

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,
Inwapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

LXIX.

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere ;

LXX.

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime ;

LXXI.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seemed to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

LXXII.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moonrise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea,

LXXIII.

And knows not if it be thunder or the sound
Of stones thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, “ I have found
A new land, but I die.”

LXXIV.

She howled aloud “ I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin
Dying the death I die ? ”

LXXV.

So when four years were wholly finishèd,
She threw her royal robes away.
“ Make me a cottage in the vale,” she said,
“ Where I may mourn and pray.

LXXVI.

“ Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built :
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt.”

THE MAY QUEEN.

I.

You must wake and call me early, call me early,
mother dear ;
Tomorrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the blythe
Newyear ;
Of all the glad Newyear, mother, the maddest merriest
day—
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

II.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none
so bright as mine :
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline :

But none so fair as little Alice in all the land, they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

III.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never
wake,
If ye do not call me loud when the day begins to break :
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and
garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

IV.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-
tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him
yesterday,—
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

v.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in
white,

And I ran by him without speaking like a flash o'
light

They call me cruelhearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

vi.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be :
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that
to me ?

There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

vii.

Little Effie shall go with me tomorrow to the green,
And you'll be there too, mother, to see me made the
Queen ;

For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from
far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

VIII.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy
bowers,
And by the meadowtrenches blow the faint sweet
cuckoo-flowers ;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps
and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

IX.

The nightwinds come and go, mother, upon the
meadowgrass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as
they pass ;

There will not be a drop o' rain the whole o' the
livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

x.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance
and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

xi.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early,
mother dear,
Tomorrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad
Newyear :
Tomorrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

NEWYEAR'S EVE.

I.

IF you're waking call me early, call me early, mother
dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad Newyear.
It is the last Newyear that I shall ever see,
Then ye may lay me low i' the mould and think no
more o' me.

II.

Tonight I saw the sun set : he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace
of mind ;

And the Newyear's coming up, mother, but I shall
never see

The may upon the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

III.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a
merry day ;

Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me
Queen of May ;

And we danced about the maypole and in the hazel-
copse,

Till Charles's wain came out above the tall white
chimneytops.

IV.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on
the pane :

I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :

I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on
high—

I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

V.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elmtree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer
o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering
grave.

VI.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave o'
mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world
is still.

VII.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the
waning light,
Ye'll never see me more in the long gray fields at
night;

When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow
cool,
On the oatgrass and the swordgrass, and the bulrush
in the pool.

VIII.

Ye'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn
shade,
And ye'll come sometimes and see me where I am
lowly laid.
I shall not forget ye, mother, I shall hear ye when
ye pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and
pleasant grass.

IX.

I have been wild and wayward, but ye'll forgive me now;
Ye'll kiss me, my own mother, upon my cheek and brow;
Nay—nay, ye must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
Ye should not fret for me, mother, ye have another
child.

X.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting
place ;

Tho' ye'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your
face ;

Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what ye say,
And be often—often with ye when ye think I'm faraway.

XI.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight
for evermore,

And ye see me carried out from the threshold of the
door ;

Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be
growing green :

She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

XII.

She'll find my gardentools upon the granary floor :

Let her take 'em : they are her's : I shall never
garden more :

But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush
that I set,
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

XIII.

Goodnight, sweet mother : call me when it begins to
dawn.

All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad Newyear,
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother
dear.

THE HESPERIDES.

Hesperus and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree.

COMUS.

THE Northwind fall'n, in the newstarrèd night
Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond
The hoary promontory of Soloë
Past Thymiaterion, in calmèd bays,
Between the southern and the western Horn,
Heard neither warbling of the nightingale,
Nor melody o' the Lybian lotusflute
Blown seaward from the shore ; but from a slope
That ran bloombright into the Atlantic blue,
Beneath a highland leaning down a weight
Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedarshade,
Came voices, like the voices in a dream,
Continuous, till he reached the outer sea.

SONG.

I.

The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charmèd root.
Round about all is mute,
As the snowfield on the mountain-peaks,
As the sandfield at the mountain-foot.
Crocodiles in briny creeks
Sleep and stir not : all is mute.
If ye sing not, if ye make false measure,
We shall lose eternal pleasure,
Worth eternal want of rest.
Laugh not loudly : watch the treasure
Of the wisdom of the west.
In a corner wisdom whispers. Five and three
(Let it not be preached abroad) make an awful mystery.
For the blossom unto threefold music bloweth ;
Evermore it is born anew ;

And the sap to threefold music floweth,
From the root
Drawn in the dark,
Up to the fruit,
Creeping under the fragrant bark,
Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and thro'.
Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,
Looking warily
Every way,
Guard the apple night and day,
Lest one from the East come and take it away.

II.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, ever
and aye,
Looking under silver hair with a silver eye.
Father, twinkle not thy stedfast sight ;
Kingdoms lapse, and climates change, and races die;
Honour comes with mystery ;
Hoarded wisdom brings delight.
Number, tell them over and number

How many the mystic fruittree holds,
Lest the redcombed dragon slumber
Rolled together in purple folds.
Look to him, father, lest he wink, and the golden
apple be stol'n away,
For his ancient heart is drunk with overwatchings
night and day,
Round about the hallowed fruittree curled—
Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the wind, without
stop,
Lest his scaled eyelid drop,
For he is older than the world.
If he waken, we waken,
Rapidly levelling eager eyes.
If he sleep, we sleep,
Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.
If the golden apple be taken
The world will be overwise.
Five links, a golden chain, are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Bound about the golden tree.

III.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, night,
and day,

Lest the old wound of the world be healèd,

The glory unsealèd,

The golden apple stol'n away,

And the ancient secret revealèd.

Look from west to east along :

Father, old Himala weakens, Caucasus is bold and
strong.

Wandering waters unto wandering waters call ;

Let them clash together, foam and fall.

Out of watchings, out of wiles,

Comes the bliss of secret smiles.

All things are not told to all.

Half-round the mantling night is drawn,

Purplefringèd with even and dawn.

Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hateth morn.

IV.

Every flower and every fruit the redolent breath,

Of this warm seawind ripeneth,

Arching the billow in his sleep ;
But the landwind wandereth,
Broken by the highland-steep,
Two streams upon the violet deep :
For the western sun and the western star,
And the low west wind, breathing afar,
The end of day and beginning of night
Make the apple holy and bright ;
Holy and bright, round and full, bright and blest,
Mellowed in a land of rest ;
Watch it warily day and night ;
All good things are in the west.
Till midnight the cool east light
Is shut out by the round of the tall hillbrow ;
But when the fullfaced sunset yellowly
Stays on the flowering arch of the bough,
The luscious fruitage clustereth mellowly,
Goldenkernelled, goldencored,
Sunset-ripened above on the tree.
The world is wasted with fire and sword,
But the apple of gold hangs over the sea.

Five links, a golden chain, are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Daughters three,
Bound about
All round about
The gnarlèd bole of the charmèd tree.
The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed
fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Watch it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charmèd root.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

I.

“COURAGE!” he said, and pointed toward the land,
“This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”

In the afternoon they came unto a land,

In which it seemèd always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

Above the valley burned the golden moon ;

And like a downward smoke, the slender stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

II.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,
Slowdropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river's seaward flow
From the inner land : far off, three mountaintops,
Three thundercloven thrones of oldest snow,
Stood sunsetflushed : and, dewed with showery drops,
Upclomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

III.

The charmèd sunset lingered low adown
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;
A land where all things always seemed the same !
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mildeyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

IV.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

V.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, " We will return no more ;"
And all at once they sang, " Our island home
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG.

I.

There is sweet music here that softer falls,
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or nightdews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass.
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the longleaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?

All things have rest : why should *we* toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown ;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings ;
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
“ ‘ There is no joy but calm ! ”
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ?

III.

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sunsteeped at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dewfed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo ! sweetened with the summer light,
The fulljuiced apple, waxing overmellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night. .

All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fastrooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

Hateful is the darkblue sky,
Vaulted o'er the darkblue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah! why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence, ripen, fall and cease.
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease!

V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With halfshut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a halfdream !
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrhbush on the height ;
To hear each other's whispered speech ;
Eating the Lotos, day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray :
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mildminded melancholy ;
To muse and brood, and live again in memory,
With the old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass :

VI.

Or, propt on lavish beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly,)
With halfdropt eyelids still,

Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thicketwinèd vine—
To hear the emeraldcoloured water falling
'Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the
pine.

VII.

The Lotos blooms below the flowery peak :
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
dust is blown.

We have had enough of motion,
Weariness and wild alarm,
Tossing on the tossing ocean,

Where the tuskèd seahorse walloweth
In a stripe of grassgreen calm,
At noon tide beneath the lee ;
And the monstrous narwhale swalloweth
His foamfountains in the sea.
Long enough the winedark wave our weary bark did
carry.

This is lovelier and sweeter,
Men of Ithaca, this is meeter,
In the hollow rosy vale to tarry,
Like a dreamy Lotos-eater, a delirious Lotos-eater !
We will eat the Lotos, sweet
As the yellow honeycomb,
In the valley some, and some
On the ancient heights divine ;
And no more roam,
On the loud hoar foam,
To the melancholy home
At the limit of the brine,
The little isle of Ithaca, beneath the day's decline.
We'll lift no more the shattered oar,

No more unfurl the straining sail;
With the blissful Lotoseaters pale
We will abide in the golden vale
Of the Lotos-land, till the Lotos fail;
We will not wander more.
Hark ! how sweet the horned ewes bleat
On the solitary steeps,
And the merry lizard leaps,
And the foamwhite waters pour ;
And the dark pine weeps,
And the lithe vine creeps,
And the heavy melon sleeps
On the level of the shore :
Oh ! islanders of Ithaca, we will not wander more.
Surely, surely slumber is more sweet than toil, the
shore
Than labour in the ocean, and rowing with the oar.
Oh ! islanders of Ithaca, we will return no more.

ROSALIND.

I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
Whose free delight, from any height of rapid flight,
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind?

II.

The quick lark's closest-carolled strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,

The lightningflash atween the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,
And flashes off a thousand ways,
Through lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawkeyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me through with pointed light;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :
Too long you keep the upper skies ;
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heathflower in the dew,
Touched with sunrise. We must bind
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you love :
When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,
From North to South ;
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
And kiss away the bitter words
From off your rosy mouth.*

* Perhaps the following lines may be allowed to stand as a separate

poem; originally they made part of the text, where they were manifestly superfluous.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,
Is one of those who know no strife
Of inward woe or outward fear ;
To whom the slope and stream of life,
The life before, the life behind,
In the ear, from far and near,
Chimeth musically clear.
My falconhearted Rosalind,
Fullsailed before a vigorous wind,
Is one of those, who cannot weep
For others' woes, but overleap
All the petty shocks and fears
'That trouble life in early years,
With a flash of frolic scorn
And keen delight, that never falls
Away from freshness, self-upborne
With such gladness as, whenever
The freshflushing springtime calls
To the flooding waters cool,
Young fishes, on an April morn,
Up and down a rapid river,
Leap the little waterfalls
That sing into the pebbled pool.
My happy falcon, Rosalind,
Hath daring fancies of her own,
Fresh as the dawn before the day,
Fresh as the early seasmell blown
Through vineyards from an inland bay.
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
Because no shadow on you falls
Think you hearts are tennisballs,
To play with, wanton Rosalind ?

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I.

As when a man, that sails in a balloon,
Downlooking sees the solid shining ground
Stream from beneath him in the broad blue noon,—
Tilth, hamlet, mead and mound :

II.

And takes his flags and waves them to the mob,
That shout below, all faces turned to where
Glows rubylike the far-up crimson globe,
Filled with a finer air :

III.

So, lifted high, the Poet at his will

Lets the great world flit from him, seeing all,
Higher thro' secret splendours mounting still,
Selfpoised, nor fears to fall,

IV.

Hearing apart the echoes of his fame.

While I spoke thus, the seedsman, memory,
Sowed my deepfurrowed thought with many a name,
Whose glory will not die.

V.

I read, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
“ *The legend of good women*,” long ago
Sung by the morningstar of song, who made
His music heard below,—

VI.

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

VII.

And, for awhile, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

VIII.

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

IX.

In every land I thought that, more or less,
The stronger sterner nature overbore
The softer, uncontrolled by gentleness
And selfish evermore :

X.

And whether there were any means whereby,
In some far aftertime, the gentler mind
Might reassume its just and full degree
Of rule among mankind.

XI.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars ;

XII.

And clattering flints battered with clanging hoofs :
And I saw crowds in columned sanctuaries ;
And forms that screamed at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;

XIII.

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;
Lances in ambush set ;

XIV.

And high shrinedoors burst thro' with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire,
White surf windscattered over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher,

XV.

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hushed seraglios.

XVI.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the selfsame way,
Crisp foamflakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

XVII.

I started once, or seemed to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

XVIII.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddlebow,
That bore a lady from a leaguered town ;
And then, I know not how,

XIX.

All those sharp fancies, by downlapsing thought
Streamed onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

XX.

At last methought that I had wandered far
In an old wood: freshwashed in coolest dew,
The maiden splendours of the morningstar
Shook in the stedfast blue.

XXI.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

XXII.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

XXIII.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill.
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

XXIV.

As that wide forest. Claspings jasmine turned
Its twined arms festooning tree to tree,
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burned
The red anemone.

XXV.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark woodwalks drenched in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

XXVI.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Poured back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

XXVII.

And from within me a clear undertone
Thrilled thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime :
“ Pass freely thro' ! the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time.”

XXVIII.

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stillter than chiselled marble standing there ,
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

XXIX.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech : she turning on my face
The starlike sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

XXX.

“ I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity.”

XXXI.

“ No marvel, sovran lady ! in fair field,
Myself for such a face had boldly died,”
I answered free, and turning I appealed
To one that stood beside.

XXXII.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws ;
“ My youth,” she said, “ was blasted with a curse :
This woman was the cause.

XXXIII.

“ I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears :
My father held his hand upon his face ;
I, blinded with my tears,

XXXIV.

“ Still strove to speak—my voice was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern blackbearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

XXXV.

“ The tall masts quivered as they lay afloat,
The temples and the people and the shore.
One drew a sharp knife thro’ my tender throat
Slowly,—and nothing more.”

XXXVI.

Whereto the other with a downward brow :
“ I would the white cold heavyplunging foam,
Whirled by the wind, had rolled me deep below,
Then when I left my home.”

XXXVII.

Her slow full words sank thro’ the silence drear,
As thunderdrops fall on a sleeping sea :
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, “ Come here,
That I may look on thee.”

XXXVIII.

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled ;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Browbound with burning gold.

XXXIX.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :

“ I governed men by change, and so I sway'd
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.

Once, like the moon, I made

XL.

“ The evershifting currents of the blood

According to my humour ebb and flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood :

That makes my only woe.

XLI.

“ Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend

One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye

That dull coldblooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,

Where is Mark Antony ?

XLII.

“ By him great Pompey dwarfs and suffers pain,

A mortal man before immortal Mars ;

The glories of great Julius lapse and wane,

And shrink from suns to stars.

XLIII.

“ That man, of all the men I ever knew,
Most touched my fancy. O! what days and nights
We had in Egypt, ever reaping new
Harvest of ripe delights,

XLIV.

“ Realmdraining revels ! Life was one long feast.
What wit ! what words ! what sweet words, only
made
Less sweet by the kiss that broke 'em, liking best
To be so richly stayed !

XLV.

“ What dainty strifes, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my gallant Antony,
My mailed captain leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die !

XLVI.

“ And in those arms he died : I heard my name
Sighed forth with life : then I shook off all fear :
Oh what a little snake stole Cæsar's fame !
What else was left ? look here !”

XLVII.

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polished argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.)

XLVIII.

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name for ever!—lying robed and crowned,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

XLIX.

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Touched by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change
Of liveliest utterance.

L.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and filled with light
The interval of sound.

LI.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts ;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

LII.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird,
That claps his wings at dawn.

LIII.

“ The torrent brooks of hallowed Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

LIV.

“ The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deepblue gloom with beams divine :
All night the splintered crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine.”

LV.

As one, that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

LVI.

Within, and anthem sung, is charmed and tied
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

LVII.

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's towered gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

LVIII.

My words leapt forth: "Heaven heads the count of
crimes
With that wild oath." She rendered answer high:
"Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

LIX.

“ Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
 Creeps to the garden waterpipes beneath,
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit
 Changed, I was ripe for death.

LX.

“ My God, my land, my father —these did move
 Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
Lowered softly with a threefold chord of love
 Down to a silent grave.

LXI.

“ And I went mourning, ‘ no fair Hebrew boy
 Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers’ —emptied of all joy,
 Leaving the dance and song,

LXII.

“ Leaving the olivegardens far below,
 Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grapeloaded vines that glow
 Beneath the battled tower.

LXIII.

“ The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
 We heard the lion roaring in his den :
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
 Or, from the darkened glen,

LXIV.

“ Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
 And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
 A solemn scorn of ills.

LXV.

“ When the next moon was rolled into the sky,
 Strength came to me that equalled my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
 For God and for my sire!

LXVI.

“ It comforts me in this one thought to dwell—
 That I subdued me to my father's will ;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
 Sweetens the spirit still.

LXVII.

“ Moreover it is written that my race

Hewed Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.” Here her face
Glowed, as I looked at her.

LXVIII.

She locked her lips : she left me where I stood :

“ Glory to God,” she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morningstar.

LXIX.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,

As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

LXX.

“ Alas ! alas ! ” a low voice, full of care.

Murmured beside me ; “ Turn and look on me :
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

LXXI.

“ Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor !
O me ! that I should ever see the light !
Those dragon eyes of angered Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.”

LXXII.

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust :
To whom the Egyptian : “ O, you tamely died !
You should have clung to Fulvia’s waist, and thrust
The dagger thro’ her side.”

LXXIII.

With that sharp sound the white dawn’s creeping beams,
Stol’n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

LXXIV.

Morn broadened on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, that in her latest trance
Clasped her dead father’s heart, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France ;

LXXV.

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

LXXVI.

No memory labours longer from the deep
Goldmines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

LXXVII.

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compassed, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again !
But no two dreams are like.

LXXVIII.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be exprest
By signs or groans or tears;

LXXIX.

Because all words, tho' culled with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.



SONG.



WHO can say
Why Today
Tomorrow will be yesterday?
Who can tell
Why to smell
The violet, recalls the dewy prime
Of youth and buried time?
The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

MARGARET.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
 Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
 Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckooflower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the eveninglighted wood,
 From all things outward you have won
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
 Between the rainbow and the sun.

The very smile before you speak,
That dimples your transparent cheek,
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
The senses with a still delight
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,
 Like the tender amber round,
Which the moon about her spreadeth,
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

You love, remaining peacefully,
 To hear the murmur of the strife,
 But enter not the toil of life.

Your spirit is the calmèd sea,
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.

You are the eveningstar, always
 Remaining betwixt dark and bright :
Lulled echoes of laborious day
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light
 Float by you on the verge of night.

What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning stars,

The lionsouled Plantagenet

Sang looking thro' his prison bars ?

Exquisite Margaret, who can tell

The last wild thought of Chatelet,

Just ere the falling axe did part

The burning brain from the true heart,

Even in her sight he loved so well ?

A fairy shield your Genius made

And gave you on your natal day.

Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,

Keeps real sorrow far away.

You move not in such solitudes,

You are not less divine,

But more human in your moods,

Than your twinsister, Adeline.*

Your hair is darker, and your eyes

Touched with a somewhat darker hue,

And more aërially blue,

* Poems chiefly Lyrical,

And ever trembling thro' the dew
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

O sweet pale Margaret,

O rare pale Margaret,

Come down, come down, and hear me speak:

Tie up the ringlets on your cheek:

The sun is just about to set.

The arching limes are tall and shady,

And faint, rainy lights are seen,

Moving in the leavy beech.

Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,

Where all day long you sit between

Joy and woe, and whisper each.

Or only look across the lawn,

Look out below your bower-eaves,

Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn

Upon me thro' the jasmin-leaves.

K A T E .

I KNOW her by her angry air,
Her brightblack eyes, her brightblack hair,
Her rapid laughters wild and shrill,
As laughters of the woodpecker
From the bosom of a hill.
'Tis Kate—she sayeth what she will :
For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,
Clear as the twanging of a harp.
Her heart is like a throbbing star.
Kate hath a spirit ever strung
Like a new bow, and bright and sharp
As edges of the scymetar.

Whence shall she take a fitting mate ?

For Kate no common love will feel ;

My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,

As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith " the world is void of might."

Kate saith " the men are gilded flies."

Kate snaps her fingers at my vows ;

Kate will not hear of lover's sighs.

I would I were an armèd knight,

Farfamed for wellwon enterprise,

And wearing on my swarthy brows

The garland of new-wreathed emprise ;

For in a moment I would pierce

The blackest files of clanging fight,

And strongly strike to left and right,

In dreaming of my lady's eyes.

Oh ! Kate loves well the bold and fierce ;

But none are bold enough for Kate,

She cannot find a fitting mate.

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUTBREAK OF THE
POLISH INSURRECTION.

BLOW ye the trumpet, gather from afar
The hosts to battle: be not bought and sold.
Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold;
Break through your iron shackles—fling them far.
O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar
Grew to this strength among his deserts cold;
When even to Moscow's cupolas were rolled
The growing murmurs of the Polish war!
Now must your noble anger blaze out more
Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,
The Moslem myriads fell, and fled before—
Than when Zamoysky smote the Tatar Khan;
Than earlier, when on the Baltic shore
Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

SONNET.

ON THE RESULT OF THE LATE RUSSIAN INVASION OF
POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,
And trampled under by the last and least
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not ceased
To quiver, though her sacred blood doth drown
The fields; and out of every smouldering town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East
Transgress his ample bound to some new crown:—
Cries to Thee, “Lord, how long shall these things be?
How long shall the icyhearted Muscovite
Oppress the region?” Us, O Just and Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in three;
Us, who stand *now*, when we should aid the right—
A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

SONNET.

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in a confused dream
To states of mystical similitude ;
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, " All this hath been before,
All this *hath* been, I know not when or where."
So, friend, when first I looked upon your face,
Our thought gave answer, each to each, so true,
Opposèd mirrors each reflecting each—
Altho' I knew not in what time or place,
Methought that I had often met with you,
And each had lived in the other's mind and speech.

O DARLING ROOM.

I.

O DARLING room, my heart's delight,
Dear room, the apple of my sight,
With thy two couches soft and white,
There is no room so exquisite,
No little room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II.

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,
And Oberwinter's vineyards green,
Musical Lurlei ; and between
The hills to Bingen have I been,
Bingen in Darmstadt, where the Rhene
Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

III.

Yet never did there meet my sight,
In any town, to left or right,
A little room so exquisite,
With two such couches, soft and white ;
Not any room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

You did late review my lays,
 Crusty Christopher ;
You did mingle blame and praise,
 Rusty Christopher.
When I learnt from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame,
 Musty Christopher ;
I could *not* forgive the praise,
 Fusty Christopher.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

I.

FULL kneedeep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :
Toll ye the churchbell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die.
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

II.

He lieth still : he doth not move :

He will not see the dawn of day.

He hath no other life above.

He gave me a friend, and a true truelove,

And the Newyear will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go.

So long as you have been with us,

Such joy as you have seen with us,

Old year, you shall not go.

III.

He frothed his bumpers to the brim ;

A jollier year we shall not see.

But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,

And tho' his foes speak ill of him,

He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die.

We did so laugh and cry with you,

I've half a mind to die with you,

Old year, if you must die.

IV.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride posthaste,
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the Newyear blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

V.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro :
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :
'Tis nearly one o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.

Old year, we'll dearly rue for you.

What is it we can do for you—

Speak out before you die.

VI.

His face is growing sharp and thin.

Alack! our friend is gone.

Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:

Step from the corpse, and let him in

That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.

There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,

And a new face at the door, my friend,

A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

I.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

II.

My heart this knowledge bolder made,
Or else it had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

III.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are nurst,
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :
Those we love first are taken first.

IV.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us ; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

V.

This is the curse of time. Alas !
In grief I am not all unlearned :
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass ;
One went, who never hath returned.

VI.

He will not smile—not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

VII.

Your loss is rarer; for this star
 Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wandered far,
 Shot on the sudden into dark.

VIII.

I knew your brother: his mute dust
 I honour and his living worth:
A man more pure and mild and just
 Was never born into the earth.

IX.

I have not looked upon you nigh,
 Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I:
 I will not tell you not to weep.

X.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
 Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
 " Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain."

XI.

Let Grief be her own mistress still.

She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

XII.

I will not say “God’s ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind;”
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

XIII.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the sunken sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

XIV.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seemed distant, and a tear
Dropt on my tablets as I wrote.









